

several things to protect the Rio Grande as a living, flowing, natural system.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that the agreement reached encompasses a central component that I advanced through legislation in 2003. I introduced the Middle Rio Grande Emergency Water Supply Stabilization Act in an effort to find a common-sense approach to sustainable water management in New Mexico. I knew then that the "solutions" being bandied about were little more than quick-fix answers that would not solve our real water crisis.

My bill dealt with these realities and many other crucial issues. It set up incentives to conserve our water resources and develop collaborative solutions at the local level. It aimed to restore and protect the Rio Grande River and the surrounding Bosque, and encouraged technological solutions for new sources of water and methods to harness such technology to increase water efficiency.

My bill paved the way for the creation of a conservation pool of water to support a living river. This was a very different approach than advanced by others. The Albuquerque City Council and a host of other entities, including conservation groups, farmers, the New Mexico Conference of Churches, and AARP New Mexico endorsed my legislation.

I am pleased that the accord reached by the city and the environmental groups includes my provision. Indeed, for the first time on the Rio Grande space will be allocated in the city's Abiquiu reservoir for water that will be dedicated to environmental purposes, including sustaining endangered species such as the Rio Grande silvery minnow. Under the deal, Albuquerque has committed to provide 30,000 acre-feet of storage space for exclusively environmental purposes.

In addition, the city committed to help fund a \$250,000 pilot water leasing program that would pursue agricultural water for environmental purposes, and change its water billing system to allow residents to add \$1 per month to their bills to fund environmental water acquisition for the Rio Grande.

While the agreement is welcome, our work is just beginning. The White House's 2006 budget requests \$19 million in Bureau of Reclamation funds for the Middle Rio Grande Project. That represents a \$10.2 million cut over current spending. At least \$4 million would be cut from funds available for activities to maintain compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

In 2003, the Department of the Interior developed a 10-year plan to ensure a manageable balance between endangered species and water use in the Middle Rio Grande. Implementation of that plan, by the department's own estimates, will exceed \$230 million. Yet, over the last three years, the Bush administration has only proposed investing \$19.4 million.

Making matters worse, the fiscal year 2006 Fish & Wildlife Service budget calls for eliminating \$542,000 in funding for the Middle Rio Grande Bosque initiative, labeling it a "lower priority project."

Without support from the Bush administration, it will be more and more difficult to maintain the balance that is desperately needed. I will again do everything I can to see that these disastrous reductions are reversed.

Mr. Speaker, to be a conservationist is to be an optimist. While I wanted all of the stakeholders to reach this agreement much sooner, I am glad that consensus has finally been

achieved. It represents a significant step toward a fundamental change in how New Mexico and other Western States think about and manage crucial and limited water resources. As we approach similar confrontations in the coming years, I believe that we can use this historic pact as proof that seemingly divergent parties can reach a mutually acceptable and beneficial agreement.

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF ROBERT C. "BUDDY" BENSON

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of my dear friend, Robert C. "Buddy" Benson, loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, civic activist, community leader, humanitarian, United States Veteran, and dear friend and mentor to many. His passing marks a great loss for his family and friends, and also marks a great loss for everyone whose life was touched by his own.

Grounded and humble, Mr. Benson was the quintessential "everyman," yet his seemingly ordinary life belied his extraordinary heart and generous spirit. He would stop whatever he was doing to offer a helping hand. On countless occasions, regardless of the weather, he would stop his car to help stranded motorists. Mr. Benson was a hero to the downtrodden, and consistently reached out to offer assistance to those who struggled in life, leaving a life-long legacy of endless acts of kindness offered to friends and strangers alike.

Dolores Benson, Mr. Benson's beloved wife of 58 years, their seven children, eleven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren were central to his life. The united focus on family and service to others, shared by Mr. and Mrs. Benson, continues to illuminate the hope and promise of a better day for every citizen of this working-class community, from Seven Hills to Parma.

Mr. Benson retired from LTV Steel following 40 years of diligent and honorable work as a millwright. His friendly nature, quick wit and caring heart drew others to him, and he made friends easily. Concerned with the welfare of fellow workers and their families, Mr. Benson became actively involved in the steelworkers union. He held the position of treasurer with the United Steelworkers Local 2265 for 7 years, and served as their Chairman of the Compensation Committee for 35 years.

His life-long interest in politics and strong faith in the notion that "together, we can make a difference," served to enrich our community's Democratic Party. Mr. Benson served as the president of the Seven Hills Democratic Club from 1983 to 1999, and led the effort in organizing several political campaigns. His humble nature precluded him from reveling in awards and accolades. However, his compassionate service to others was often recognized. In 1994, the Seven Hills Democratic Club named him "Democrat of the Year." He was the recipient of citations from the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate Committee, which highlighted his humanitarian efforts.

Mr. Benson's faith was anchored by his church, St. Anthony of Padua, where he was

also a founding member. He volunteered on many community boards, including Pius X Council, VFW Post 1973, CAMEO, Southwest COPE, (AFL-CIO), and the Finance Committee of St. Anthony's.

Mr. Benson's greatest legacy is reflected in the lives of his family and friends; within the peaceful calm of St. Anthony's Church; within the energy of the Seven Hills Democratic Party, along the halls of Parma City Hall, and within the hearts of everyone whose life was touched by his.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and remembrance of Robert C. "Buddy" Benson. The infinite measure of his heart, his courage, vision and integrity, defined his life and served to lift the lives of countless individuals and families throughout our west side suburbs. Mr. Benson's kindness, energy and compassion will be greatly missed within the hearts of his many friends, including my own. I extend my deepest condolences to his beloved wife, Dolores; His children, Robert, Jacqueline, Patrick, Mary, Elizabeth, Denis and Christine; His grandchildren, Gina, Kimberly, Bryan, Colleen, Robert, Michael, Christopher, Lauren, Christopher, Stephanie and Nicholas; His great-grand daughters, Callie and Allison.

Robert C. "Buddy" Benson lived his life with joy, energy and in unwavering service to others. His eternal faith in humanity and his consistent willingness to give of himself, while asking for nothing in return, will continue to serve as a powerful legacy of hope and possibility throughout our entire community, and his kindness and service will forever live within the hearts of all who knew and loved him well.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLIE MELANCON

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 41, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF DAVID J. O'REILLY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of David J. O'Reilly, devoted husband, father, brother, uncle, friend, and dedicated public servant. Mr. O'Reilly's commitment to the safety of Cleveland residents and concern for those less fortunate, defined his tenure of nearly two decades of outstanding public service as a police officer in Cleveland's 4th District.

Mr. O'Reilly, a life-long Clevelander, graduated from Benedictine High School. Throughout his entire adult life, Mr. O'Reilly remained committed to the welfare of his Slavic Village neighborhood. Affectionately known as the "Mayor of Fleet Avenue," Mr. O'Reilly was a role model to neighborhood kids, and was a friend to our most fragile citizens, our homeless. Mr. O'Reilly's bravery and strength as a